

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AGRE-00 /059 W
-----062323 272003Z /75

P R 271822Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3526
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 8303

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PGOV PINT PO
SUBJECT: PS TACTICS: TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS

REF: LISBON 8302 (DTG 271817Z OCT 77) (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY RUI MATEUS IS CONFIDENT
THE GOVERNMENT CAN RIDE OUT ITS CURRENT POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES.
THE PS FEELS CERTAIN THE PCP WILL NOT SUPPORT ANY PSD OR
CDS EFFORTS TO TOPPLE THE GOVERNMENT. DESPITE MATEUS'S
OPTIMISM, THERE IS GRUMBLING IN THE PS THAT EVEN SHORT-TERM
DEPENDENCE ON THE COMMUNISTS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED BY THE
PRESIDENT OR THE PEOPLE. BY HOLDING OUT THE THREAT OF
COOPERATION WITH THE PCP, THE PS IS SEEKING TO FORCE THE PSD
AND CDS TO ADOPT A MORE CONCILIATORY POSTURE. END SUMMARY.
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1. OFFICIAL OPTIMISM: PS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY RUI
MATEUS TOLD EMBOFF OCT 26:
--GOVERNMENT AND PARTY ARE OPTIMISTIC. THE GOVERNMENT IS
CONFIDENT IT CAN RIDE OUT THE CURRENT POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES.
THE OPPOSITION DOES NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO TOPPLE THE
GOVERNMENT AND NO PARTY IS PREPARED TO REPLACE THE SOCIALISTS

IF THEY LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT. THE PS ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN THE PAST WEEK AND MEMBERSHIP IS UP TO 150,000. THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT DROP IN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE PARTY, BUT THE PS IS STILL PORTUGAL'S FIRST PARTY.

--THE WAY OUT. THE PS WOULD PREFER TO REACH A POLITICAL AGREEMENT WITH THE PSD. BUT, SHOULD THE PSD AND CDS PRESENT A CENSURE MOTION OR SYSTEMATICALLY SEEK TO BLOCK GOVERNMENT LAWS, THE SOCIALISTS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE PCP WOULD NOT LET THE GOVERNMENT FALL. DESPITE THE LONG PUBLIC LIST OF PCP DEMANDS IN RETURN FOR ITS COOPERATION, THE COMMUNISTS WOULD SETTLE FOR SLACK ENFORCEMENT OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW PASSED IN JULY.

--RANK AND FILE AGAINST COALITION. SOCIALISTS HAVE CONDUCTED AN INFORMAL SURVEY OF THE RANK AND FILE WHICH DEMONSTRATES THAT THE MAJORITY OPPOSE THE PS OPENING THE GOVERNMENT TO A COALITION.

-- CONFIDENCE IN PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT. EANES WOULD NOT INTERVENE SO LONG AS THE SOARES GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO GET ITS ESSENTIAL LEGISLATION THROUGH THE ASSEMBLY. EANES WOULD NOT EXPOSE HIMSELF TO CRITICISM FOR MOVING PREMATURELY.

--GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION DELAYED. THE REORGANIZATION OF THE SOARES GOVERNMENT WILL BE DELAYED UNTIL AFTER FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OTHER PARTIES. FINANCE MINISTER MEDINA CARREIRA WILL LEAVE. AGRICULTURE MINISTER ANTONIO BARRETO IS UNHAPPY BECAUSE OF FRIENDSHIP WITH FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER
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MEDEIROS FERREIRA. MEDEIROS FERREIRA'S RESIGNATION WAS PART OF A PLAN TO PUSH MARIO SOARES ASIDE.

-- CONCERN WITH THE PSD. THE SOCIALISTS FEAR THAT SA CARNEIRO MAY BE PLOTTING WITH THE RIGHT-WING MILITARY. THE PSD MAY ALSO BE CONSIDERING AN APPEAL TO NATIONALISM IN A CAMPAIGN AGAINST FOREIGN LOANS. SUCH A STRATEGY MIGHT BRING THE PCP AND PSD TOGETHER AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

2. PS CONCERN FROM WITHIN: PS NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER AND "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" ASSISTANT EDITOR MARIO MESQUITA HAS WRITTEN TWO EDITORIALS IN RECENT WEEKS CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT. A WORRIED MESQUITA TOLD EMBOFF OCT 26:
-- PS IS OVERCONFIDENT. SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS ARE ERRONEOUSLY PLACING A "TRIUMPHAL" INTERPRETATION UPON PRESIDENT EANES'S SPEECH. THE PS HAS MADE A TACTICAL DECISION TO DEPEND ON COMMUNIST PARTY SUPPORT IN THE SHORT RUN; A TACTIC THAT THE PRESIDENT, THE ARMED FORCES, AND THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WILL NOT TOLERATE FOR LONG. THE PS DECISION IS IN PART AN EFFORT TO FORCE THE PSD AND CDS TO BE MORE CONCILIATORY, BUT IT'S RISKY. (COMMENT: WE AGREE.)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 8303

--DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE PS. JORGE CAMPINOS AND MANUEL
ALEGRE ARE THE PRIME ARCHITECTS OF THE ABOVE STRATEGY. OTHER
PS LEADERS INCLUDING ANTONIO BARRETO AND JAIME GAMA DISAGREE.
--INSUFFICIENT GIVE ON BOTH SIDES. THERE WILL BE NO REAL
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PS AND PSD. THE PSD HAS SET
UNREALISTIC PRECONDITIONS SUCH AS MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIALIST
INTERNATIONAL. MARIO SOARES HAS NOT OFFERED ANY REAL
CONCESSIONS IN NEGOTIATIONS. PART OF THE PROBLEM IS THE
PERSONAL DISLIKE BETWEEN SOARES AND SA CARNEIRO.
-- THE PS WILL FOLLOW SOARES. THE PS RANK AND FILE WOULD
SUPPORT ANY SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT CRISIS PROPOSED BY
MARIO SOARES PROVIDING THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION WERE
EXPLAINED IN ADVANCE. BUT LAST WEEKEND'S STATEMENTS AGAIN
REJECTING ALLIANCES MAKE ANY RETREAT FROM THAT STAND
MORE DIFFICULT.
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-- CONCERN OVER PSD. SA CARNEIRO'S RECENT CRITICISM OF

PRESIDENT EANES'S SPEECH ARE OF CONCERN. SA CARNEIRO MAY BE APPEALING TO THOSE MILITARY TO THE RIGHT OF EANES WHO WOULD LIKE THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE.

3. COMMENT: MATEUS'S GLOWING OPTIMISM CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH MESQUITA'S PREOCCUPATION. THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE IMPLIED THREAT OF PS COOPERATION WITH THE PCP IS HAVING THE DESIRED EFFECT OF BRINGING THE PSD AND CDS AROUND (SEE REFTEL). NONTHELESS, FURTHER CLASHES AMONG THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES SEEM INEVITABLE IN THE SHORT RUN.
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